

The McShane Dimension

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. 1600 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NW, US - DAYLIGHT

Winter morning, in front of the US White House.

An attractive formal MAN in Brioni wool trenchcoat and dark blackish hair walks casual and relaxed toward a White House exterior guard post. The Man is a precise duplicate of actor Ian McShane at age 57, from McShane's year 2000 role in the movie SEXY BEAST. Same stark and almost frightening face with electric grey eyes and occasionally gentle smile.



The Man stops, looks around. What he sees bothers him, but he moves again toward the White House guard.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Around 20 WHITE HOUSE STAFF of various professions are here. They observe The Man, who's assisted in the removal of his wool trenchcoat. Underneath he's clothed in an excellent Brioni business suit, dark.

This is clearly a different event for the White House.

The Man is scanned with sensor equipment, then walks smiling through a guarded hall toward the Oval Office. The Man observes all he passes, in a way that suggests his own curiosity and complete lack of concern.

The Man approaches the door to the Oval Office. It's quickly opened by a SECURITY COMMANDER. Inside is THE PRESIDENT, an older white male, and about 12 of The President's STAFF.

The Man enters and stops.

THE MAN
(Mid-Atlantic British
accent)
Hello again.

THE PRESIDENT
Nice to see you. You can sit if you
like.

The President gestures to a seat dead center of the office,
in front of his desk. The man smiles again, walks over and
sits. His style is crossed-leg and highly confident.

The others in the office take seats as well. As does the
President. The entry closes.

THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Can we get you something?

THE MAN
I'm fine. Shall we start?

The President motions with his left hand. A few beats.

THE MAN (CONT'D)
Let's not pretend that none of you
know who I am. Nor is the face
real. It was adapted for various
reasons. Some of us like the
actor's usefulness. But we of
course are not him.

THE PRESIDENT
Understood. We like him, too.

Small chuckles around The Oval.

THE MAN
We're visiting for a variety of
reasons. To be honest, your species
is a failure. A joke. And yet you
have this arcane developmental idea
regarding good and evil. Few to
none of you are capable of seeing
even something as simple as that, a
mere genetic engram. Which is of
course based completely upon
survival and the impulses it brings
to your table, all the time.

THE PRESIDENT
I see. Still, I'm not sure what you
want. Or why.

THE MAN

Nothing. Your species is failed, as a group. How and what you do is absurd. We even tried to help a bit, correcting your period 13,000 years ago with a stupid Van Allen rock. Some think it was a comet.

THE PRESIDENT

Explain?

THE MAN

Why bother? Anyway, you seem incapable of grasping the fact that, as a species, Homo sapiens should have changed long ago. You crossed an evolutionary path and became what you are around 335,000 back. And yet it took another 323,000-ish years for as simple an act of progress as the introduction of Mesopotamia. And 7,000 later, Sumerians, your first "civilization" to utilize cohesive written language and other such things. And even *that* took an additional 15,000 years or so, from simple cave language 20,000 years from today. Are you truly that fucking dumb? Yes. You are.

Silence. A throat clears, the person says nothing.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

All these years and still a species using toilets and money. Killing and maiming your own. Culturally celebrating the predatory. And predators include all of you in this room, by the way, who are really just apex survivors, doing well at the expense of others.

CHIEF OF STAFF

Excuse me, sir, but this all sounds a bit over the top. What exactly have you done that's better than what we are?

THE MAN

Everything. You're too fucking close to your own canvas to even begin seeing how far you are from genuine intelligence.

(MORE)

THE MAN (CONT'D)

Sophisticated is merely a word you like to use. Over dinner.

THE PRESIDENT

Is it fair that we're judged by a small amount of time? After all, change itself requires *time* itself. Isn't that true?

THE MAN

No.

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS

Sir, if I may. I'm a bit confused, but open to understanding. Technologically we're extremely far from the Sumers. Or ancient Egyptians, Mesopotamians, or the original offshoots of *Homo sapiens*. How are we not progressing?

A few beats.

THE MAN

You see, this is where you get "jammed up". As a species, as a living society...you really haven't changed at all. Your TVs and computers and cars. Please tell me how these things have changed *what* you are. You still rob, deceive, kill, engage in tribal warfare, provide unjustified suppression of your societies from ideas as ludicrous as distribution of wealth and hostile allocation of resources. You've lost millions, perhaps billions of your historic populations in wars over oil, land, mining, agriculture. And so on. From 335,000 years ago, to now. A shame.

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS

All of this seems rather arbitrary. And unfair.

THE MAN

(laughs)

Of course it does! To *you*. This is what you and your kind always say. *It's unfair. We don't understand.* Right. No. You're wrong. You are consistent, self-serving failures.

(MORE)

THE MAN (CONT'D)

How do I know? Because my species is vastly experienced and superior to yours. Not to mention, we run this fucking "life" thing. 100%. And always have. And we were kind enough to give you a bit of the welcome mat.

CHIEF OF STAFF

Mr. President, I think this has gone far enough. If we—

THE PRESIDENT

Dan, shut up.

A couple beats of silence.

THE MAN

Thank you, Mr. President.

CHIEF OF STAFF

No, enough of the bullshit, Sam. This guy is violating at least seven of our long-loved constitutional codes. Can't we put some Goddamned handcuffs on him, or maybe a straight jacket?

THE PRESIDENT

I don't have the time or space to explain the situation. I guarantee that even modern bullets and bombs would have no effect on the gentleman. Please. Listen to him.

CHIEF OF STAFF

Sam, my job is to—

THE MAN

Obey. And trust your president. Because he is absolutely correct. And try *objectivity* instead of one-sided views. Pull above what you see. And know it for what it is.

The Chief of Staff stares at The Man. In some way, he seems to accept what he's been told. Reluctantly.

THE PRESIDENT

Sir, I— Is there a path here, for your people and mine, to become longtime friends? Work together? Surely there's some way to do that.

THE MAN

Well. You're not really friends with other lands or races on the planet, at all. Your so-called cultural friendships between various political bodies are limited to what you want or need from one another. We're speaking about the societal level of a nation or continent, down to something as simple as the small rooms you live in, and breed in, whether city or rural. Where can a path exist in all that?

CHIEF OF STAFF

Well, I'm not sure any of this can be resolved in a way that pleases you, sir. We try. We really do. What more do you want from us?

THE MAN

First, objectivity. As I said. Second, you only "try" using marginalized powers to entertain and occupy. The actual individuals who decide power structures and actions of nations, like those in this room, don't give a damn about those who try and stop avarice or military action. Recall 335,000 years ago? Nothing has changed. Same military, political nonsense. Like stupid children. Only your clothing is different. By the way, how you like my suit?

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS

Brioni.

THE MAN

Yes.

THE PRESIDENT

Sir, please allow me a second. Or a minute. I respect all you've said. As do most of us here. But we are still very nervous about the purpose of this meeting. What do you want from us? What can we do?

THE MAN

Understand that I am *not* speaking to only you, in this Oval Office, in this place called Washington D.C., exclusively. This US empire of yours is merely one of three somewhat equal powers on the planet. All will be addressed, and very soon.

THE PRESIDENT

Sir, this is not an "empire". I know you're not familiar with this world in full, but—

THE MAN

(laughs)

Oh, really? Not familiar? We know *everything* about you that is possible to know. You're well aware of that. Oh, wait. *Politics*. Somehow you think all of this is a form of political action. Very mistaken. We are objective, only. We have no politics, Mr. President. But you certainly do. Two major sides in your current empire, one as extreme and lost as the other, getting worse all the time— but ironically never really changing at all. Don't you see that? Do I need to continually explain?

Silence. Something in what The Man said has made an adjustment. The Man looks about, and then...

THE MAN (CONT'D)

I'd love a coffee, if you have one.

The President points at a STAFF RUNNER, who immediately leaves on a coffee errand.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

Thank you.

More silence. Everyone is uncomfortable but The Man, who slowly scans everyone in the room, his grey slate eyes briefly in theirs.

The Staff Runner returns with an Oval Office/White House ceramic coffee cup. Kind of nice, really. The Man takes the cup, gently smells the coffee.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

Lovely that this entire strain of plant originated so near to the beginning of the gangly creatures that became...you.

(smiles, sips)

Mm. Very nice. Now where were we?

Oh, something I wanted to mention.

The Man stands from his chair. The entire room slightly reacts, including the buried GUARDS. The Man ignores them, walks with his coffee to the Oval Office window on the left, behind The President. He merely stands there, sipping coffee, looking at some of the MILITARY PERSONNEL outside the window.

And of course, at the grass.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

(still looking out window)

I need to relate something to all of you. About the passage of time. Might make things...my people...a bit easier to understand.

They wait silently as The Man slowly sips more coffee. The Man turns easily toward them, looks them over.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

How to say this in a crystalline fashion. Hm. As cultures advance, I mean truly advance, time starts to change for them. Why? You may find it hard to understand, but death kind of goes away, and time perspectives rise to other levels. As a starter, my genuine age, to you, is half the years of your sun.

There's a moment with the entire room sort of stunned, but they keep this emptiness hidden.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

To better align this, think of how you each understand a day. A period of 24 hours. Fine. For us, the length of a day on earth holds two-million years. The length of your 30-day month holds 60,000,000 years in our side. And so on. I am currently adjusted for substantially slower time, to sit here. With you, and others.

(MORE)

THE MAN (CONT'D)

So all the things we have done since the birth of your star is measured by *our* way of understanding time. A year for you is 720-million years for us. It becomes the same for all forms of life who escape death in their evolution. Dying is no longer part of our existence. You see?

Nobody says a thing. From the looks on faces, there's a serious moment of disbelief.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

This coffee is so excellent.

THE PRESIDENT

Sir, let's discuss why we're here. I think we're ready to move on.

THE MAN

Oh. Yes. I'm here because it's being decided right now whether to eliminate you. *Homo sapiens*. As a species. Complete and total annihilation. If this concept of "extinction" is unfamiliar, rest assured we've done it before. On this very planet. Six times. Counted as five by your science. In error, so yes: six.

PRESS SECRETARY

I'm sorry, but there's no evidence for that, at all. Mr. President, are we sure we're doing the right thing, listening to all this? How and why is it *his* right to do anything at all about us? This is our world!

THE PRESIDENT

Please be quiet, Marge.

The Press Secretary is noticeably peeved. The Man sits and smiles warmly. He looks around the room.

THE MAN

My dear—nice shoes, by the way—this world is ours. The planet? We own it. The moon and other worlds around your sun? Ours. All of them.

(MORE)

THE MAN (CONT'D)

And I could tell you a few things about Enceladus that you'd find...intriguing. This solar system, and much much more of course, has been ours for...let's see now. Something around six billion years. It's you who invaded here. Not us. And we've allowed you to stay, from the start.

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS

Sir, if this is true, why are you not allowing us to grow and develop at our own pace? And evolve fairly? Do we not have the right to be as we are, continue to better things?

THE MAN

You're not evolving. At all. Steve Jobs gave you an iPhone maybe, and yet cancer took him away. Your technology changes here and there, but you, as creatures, do not. Cannot. You've convinced yourselves you will change. You won't.

THE PRESIDENT

Sir, respectfully. How can this be true? Can you not see what we see?

THE MAN

Ah, here we go again. Claiming you know something, when you know nothing. Let me be as direct and simple as possible: We have destroyed almost all life on this planet—our planet—six times. Each time for different reasons, but always when sadly confronted with genetic and quantum affairs that resulted in disaster. Many of these you don't know about. The dinosaurs...silly word...that you understand. Sort of. We really liked those creatures, which, by the way, started and ended in less time than it took for this planet to orbit.

CHIEF OF STAFF

Orbit...The Milky Way?

THE MAN

Correct. This planet takes about 241 million years to completely orbit the galaxy. There was a part of space during this route which dramatically effected things. For example, many discuss why exactly dinosaurs became so ridiculously huge in their 170-million year assertion. Their gigantic sizes make little sense, right? Answer: A part of space the earth passed through, at a certain point, bathed the world in rather exotic rays, particles, atoms. We were fine with that, as an experiment. Besides, on the next orbit that part of space will no longer exist. No more giant creatures. Eventually we decided, yet again, to start over. Extinction. Not worth keeping dinos. Thus, Chicxulub.

THE PRESIDENT

Resulting in us. Later on.

THE MAN

True. The original genetic and organic material remained, and the next phases of life sort of slithered into Homo sapiens. You. Took a while. And we had such high hopes. Truly, we thought your lot would be the best thing, ever. Well. C'est la vie.

THE PRESIDENT

If you created us, then the fault is yours for designing a system based entirely upon survival.

The Man smiles, sips his coffee again. And relaxes in his seat a bit.

THE MAN

We had nothing to do with creating you. Your entire existence is based upon initial chance and circumstance. Sometimes things just arrive from an interstellar frontier. Little bugs with DNA and curious neurons and other sorts of goodies. A very old craps table that finally rendered...you.

(MORE)

THE MAN (CONT'D)

It's like this for much of everything known. The sub-atomic or theoretic casino, even.

THE PRESIDENT

Again, sir: why are you here?

The Man rises, slowly walks over and puts his coffee cup on the President's desk. With a smile, he stares into the President's eyes.

THE MAN

Apparently, I was wrong. A decision has been made. No further visits necessary. Anywhere.

The room is sort of stoic a couple beats.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

I'd like to go, now. You'll know soon where we stand on the matter.

The President slowly rises, the seated room follows.

THE PRESIDENT

There's nothing else we can say?

The Man only smiles, turns around and walks toward the entrance. The guard at the door opens for The Man, who turns and scans the entire room with his eyes, ending with The President.

The Man leaves.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE SIDEWALK - AFTERNOON

The Man, smiling and back in his wool trenchcoat, slowly walks down the Pennsylvania Avenue sidewalk.

A minimal snowfall drops all around.

The Man stops and turns toward the White House entrance he left from. He sort of frowns now.

He slightly shakes his head, continues walking away.

End.